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Summary of Briefing and Demonstration of Aperture's Vista Product

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A briefing on Aperture's Vista product was held on Thursday, April 8, 2004 in FCC1. This is a delayed summary of that briefing.

A main feature of the briefing was the demonstration of the Vista product by Eleas Petru of Aperture (e@aperture.com) and Paul Pistorio.

The briefing began with introductions by David Ritchie and a Power Point presentation by Paul Pistorio of Aperture concerning Aperture as a corporation and its software offerings. The Power Point presentation is available from:

<http://wwwserver2.fnal.gov/cfdocs/projectsdb/projdetail.cfm?ProjectID=3>

It continued with a demonstration of the Vista product by Eleas Petru. Mr. Petru demonstrated the use of Vista in the handling of computing equipment:

- to plan,
- to reserve resources (space, power, air conditioning),
- to purchase,
- to receive,
- to install,
- to commission,
- to operate, and
- to support.

Below are some observations:

1. The product only runs on Internet Explorer. This is a disadvantage but one that can probably be handled if outweighed by the other advantages of the product.
2. The product only handles installations of single items in an integrated

work flow manner.

This works fine for the one or two systems at a time sort of application. However, many of our installations are for three hundred systems at a time.

There does not seem to be a “bulk install” capability. This would mean that requestors would have to enter each of the three hundred systems repetitively.

3. Training the individuals to use the VISTA tool as a means of making a request to Phil Lutz would seem to be problematical.

In the small number of systems request case, the numbers of requests an individual makes per year is relatively small. Thus, it seems like the individuals would have forgotten whatever training they would have had to undergo by the next time they would have to make a request. It seems likely that they would just show up at Phil’s doorstep to make their request in person.

In the large number of systems request case, the numbers of requests per year by an individual client is also small. When coupled with the lack of a bulk install process, the difficulty and infrequency of using the tool suggests that clients would not be up to speed sufficiently to handle the VISTA product and would also show up at Phil’s doorstep to make their request in person.

Thus, both kinds of requestors would end up coming to Phil to tell him what they needed and then he would input it only to turn around and “approve” it – having entered it.

This does not seem like it would spread the workload very much and would seem to complicate Phil’s life which now consists after a certain amount of conversation of just turning around and entering the information into Aperture.

4. With regard to networks on a building to building area, the network people believe that they have the network cable and fiber tracking well in hand through the use of cable management bundling.

With regard to an interior of a building, such as FCC, the network people believe that they have the organization well enough in hand through the use of paper notebooks and Excel spreadsheets.

Conclusion

There seemed to be a consensus among the Fermilab participants after the meeting that for the cost of the product, the work flow portion did not provide enough efficiency to merit purchasing it at this time.

Should conditions change, or should the running of multiple data center sites indicate otherwise, the VISTA product should be revisited.